

FLORIDA HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVE ▪ FL HFFI

Florida's Healthy Food Financing Initiative (FL HFFI) was established in 2016 by the Florida Legislature.¹ The FL HFFI was developed to provide financial assistance to construct, rehabilitate, or expand independent grocery stores, independent supermarkets, convenience stores and community facilities to increase access to fresh produce and other nutritious food in underserved and low-income communities. Florida Community Loan Fund (FCLF) was selected through a competitive process by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Food, Nutrition and Wellness (Department) to administer the initiative.

FL HFFI is a component of FCLF's existing Food Access Program, which is a collaborative effort involving a variety of funding sources. To access FL HFFI, applicants must submit an application for financing through FCLF's Food Access Program. Applicants will be underwritten for financing consistent with FCLF regular lending criteria. Eligibility for FL HFFI enhanced financing will be determined based on project metrics, need, and consistency with the FL HFFI criteria.

FL HFFI is one of several tools that FCLF's Food Access Program can use to help your project succeed.

FLORIDA HFFI GUIDELINES

ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES:

- **Food Retailers** in a low-income community in Florida identified as a Food Desert, a Limited Supermarket Access area, or a Department Priority Area under its healthy food analysis. Food Retailers may include owner-operated supermarkets, farmers markets, convenience store expansions or improvements to offer healthy food options, or mobile food markets.
- **Food Access and Distribution Systems** that create food distribution options in their communities and provide access to low-income persons. These may include food bank facilities, distribution centers, and owner-operated projects that combine health and food services.



ADVANTAGES OF FINANCING THROUGH FL HFFI:

- Lower interest rates than could otherwise be provided
- Longer periods of interest-only payments, allowing projects to get off the ground more efficiently
- In some cases, there may be provisions for equity conversion for a portion of total financing at the end of the loan term, assuming the project is performing as expected



ELIGIBLE USES:

- Acquisition
- Construction/renovation
- Recovery of predevelopment costs
- Leasehold improvements
- Equipment
- Energy efficiency improvements
- Permanent financing



**Florida Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services**

¹ Florida Statute 500.81.

FLORIDA HFFI GUIDELINES

PROJECTS MUST

MEET THESE 3 CRITERIA:

1. Be located in an underserved community:
 - a census tract determined to be an area with low access by the USDA Food Access Research Atlas; or
 - identified as a limited supermarket area as recognized by the U.S. Dept of Treasury CDFI Fund; or
 - identified as an area with low access to a supermarket or grocery store through a methodology that has been adopted for use by another governmental initiative or well-established or well-regarded philanthropic healthy food initiative.
2. Primarily serve low-income communities – a census tract which meets one of the following criteria:
 - poverty rate at least 20%; or
 - in the case of a low-income community located outside of a metropolitan area, the median family income does not exceed 80% of the statewide median family income; or
 - in the case of a low-income community located inside a metropolitan area, the median family income does not exceed 80% of the statewide median family income or 80% of the metropolitan median family income, whichever is greater.
3. Provide for the construction, renovation or expansion of:
 - existing independent grocery stores or supermarkets, including infrastructure upgrades; or
 - community facilities to improve the availability and quality of fresh produce and other healthy foods, including infrastructure upgrades.

APPLICANTS MUST:

- Accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits;
- Accept or apply to accept Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits;
- Allocate at least 30% of food retail space for the sale of perishable foods, which may include fresh or frozen dairy products, fresh produce, and fresh meats, poultry and fish;
- Comply with all data collection and reporting requirements as established by FCLF; and
- Promote the hiring of local residents.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- Preference will be given to local, Florida-based grocers, or local business owners with experience in grocery stores, and to grocers and business owners with a business plan model that includes written documentation of opportunities to purchase from Florida farmers and growers before seeking out-of-state purchases;
- The level of need in the area to be served;
- The degree to which the project will have a positive, economic impact on the underserved community, including the creation or retention of jobs for local residents; and
- The location of existing independent grocery stores, supermarkets or other facilities relevant to the applicant's project.

This is just one of FCLF's lending programs that may offer financing for your Healthy Food Access project, and this overview may not include all specifics. Financing through the FL HFFI program requires a loan application to be submitted to and approved by FCLF. Applicants interested in accessing FL HFFI financing should be aware that application materials may be subject to Florida Sunshine Laws.

EXPERTISE AND CAPITAL TO HELP YOUR PROJECT SUCCEED.



CONTACT US

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VISION

Opportunity and dignity exist for every person and community in Florida.

MISSION

Our expertise and capital make projects successful and help organizations improve lives and communities.

www.fclf.org